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SUBJECT: TURKISH PRESIDENT ATTEMPTS TO BLOCK DIRECT
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION EFFORTS

REF: ANKARA 1539

11. (U) Turkey's president filed a petition with the Constitutional Court on June 18, asking the court to annul the constitutional amendment package that would move the country to direct presidential elections (reftel). The Court will combine Sezer's challenge, which is based on procedural defects in the way parliament adopted the package, with a similar challenge filed earlier by main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP). The two cases are under review and the Court is expected to hear the combined case next week. If the Court annuls the package, it will eliminate the need for a referendum on the amendments, now slated for October.

12. (U) Sezer also vetoed legislation that would have reduced from 120 to 45 days the waiting period required before holding a referendum on a constitutional amendment. Parliament adopted the change before recessing on June 3 in an effort to take the direct presidential election amendment to the people on July 22, the same day set for general elections. Sezer's veto effectively kills the measure.

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